

CLAIMS

1. A communications services controller for a communications network comprising
 5 a plurality of communications systems connected to a network resource; a plurality of user devices connected to the services controller, the user services having a capability to use at least one of the communications systems; a plurality of contact devices connected to the network resource and having a capability to use at least one of the communications systems, some of the contact devices being additionally user devices, the services controller comprising:-
- 10 (a) a user directory comprising:-
- a user identifier;
- 15 data on all communications systems available to the user including a unique identifier for each communications system, and access data to allow the user device access the available communications systems;
- 20 (b) a roles and privileges logic controller comprising means for controlling access to a desired communications system on a user requesting to use the communications system, the roles and privileges logic controller having means for storing access rules based on the roles and privileges allocated to the user, and means to provide access based on the said access rules;
- 25 (c) a contacts directory comprising a contacts identifier, data on each communications system available to the contact device, including a unique identifier for each communications system available to the contact device for use in the managed network resource;
- 30 (d) an intercommunications server having means for contacting and

opening communications using a communications system connected to the network resource between a user device and a contacts device on receiving an access permitted signal, said intercommunications server having means to obtain the necessary access data for the user device from the user directory and for the contact device from the contacts directory.

2. A controller as claimed in claim 1, in which the intercommunications server comprises means for allowing a user device access more than one communications system simultaneously for contact with the one contact device.

3. A controller as claimed in claim 2, in which the intercommunications server comprises means for allowing a user device access more than one communications system simultaneously for contact with another contact device while communicating with a different contact device.

4. A controller as claimed in claim 2, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises means for storing a record of the access to a communications system obtained by a user during a preset period.

5. A controller as claimed in claim 2, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;

means for defining a plurality of privileges; and

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.

6. A controller as claimed in claim 2, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service provided on a specified communications systems;

means for defining a plurality of privileges; and

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.

7. A controller as claimed in claim 2, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

user device limitation,

number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

8. A controller as claimed in claim 2, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

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means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service provided on a specified communications systems;

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means for defining a plurality of privileges;

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

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total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

monetary limits over a specified time limit,

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incoming use only,

user device limitation,

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number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

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nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

9. A controller as claimed in claim 2, comprising:-

a conferencing server having means to allow a user device contact the

server, and

means in the server to aggregate the data to and from each user device
to provide a single incoming and outgoing data stream independent of
the number of users.

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10. A controller as claimed in claim 2, comprising a closed messaging device for
the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices.

10 11. A controller as claimed in claim 2, comprising a closed messaging device for
the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices and
includes means to receive and store messages from disparate messaging
services.

15 12. A controller as claimed in claim 2, comprising a unified messaging server
having means for storing store-forward-messaging services.

13. A controller as claimed in claim 2, comprising a unified messaging server
having means for storing store-forward-messaging services which comprises
one or more of:- email; voicemail; fax received and SMS messages.

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14. A controller as claimed in claim 2, comprising:-

means to allow users access to view a document;

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means to allow the user edit the document;

means to store the changes in the document due to editing by a user,
said changes being identified by user .

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15. A controller as claimed in claim 2 in which the network resource is the internet.

16. A controller as claimed in claim 2 in which the network resource is the extranet.
17. A controller as claimed in claim 2 in which the network resource is the intranet.
- 5 18. A controller as claimed in claim 2, in which the roles and privileges logic controller includes means to provide an access permitted signal and an access denied signal.
- 10 19. A controller as claimed in claim 1, in which the intercommunications server comprises means for allowing a user device access more than one communications system simultaneously for contact with another contact device while communicating with a different contact device.
- 15 20. A controller as claimed in claim 19, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises means for storing a record of the access to a communications system obtained by a user during a preset period.
- 20 21. A controller as claimed in claim 19, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-
- means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;
- means for defining a plurality of privileges; and
- 25 means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.
22. A controller as claimed in claim 19, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-
- 30 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service provided on a specified communications systems;

means for defining a plurality of privileges; and

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.

- 5 23. A controller as claimed in claim 19, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified
communications system;

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means for defining a plurality of privileges;

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the
privilege is one or more of:-

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total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

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monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

user device limitation,

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number of users already provided with the privilege communications
system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

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nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

24. A controller as claimed in claim 19, in which the roles and privileges logic

controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service provided on a specified communications systems;

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means for defining a plurality of privileges;

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

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total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

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monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

user device limitation,

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number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

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nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

25. A controller as claimed in claim 19, comprising a closed messaging device for the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices and includes means to receive and store messages from disparate messaging services.

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26. A controller as claimed in claim 19, comprising a unified messaging server

having means for storing store-forward-messaging services.

27. A controller as claimed in claim 19, comprising a unified messaging server
 5 having means for storing store-forward-messaging services and which
 comprises one or more of:- email; voicemail; fax received and SMS messages.

28. A controller as claimed in claim 19, comprising:-

means to allow users access to view a document;

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means to allow the user edit the document;

means to store the changes in the document due to editing by a user,
 said changes being identified by user .

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29. A controller as claimed in claim 1, in which the roles and privileges logic
 controller comprises means for storing a record of the access to a
 communications system obtained by a user during a preset period.

- 20 30. A controller as claimed in claim 29, in which the roles and privileges logic
 controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified
 communications system;

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means for defining a plurality of privileges; and

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.

- 30 31. A controller as claimed in claim 29, in which the roles and privileges logic
 controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service

provided on a specified communications systems;

means for defining a plurality of privileges; and

5 means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.

32. A controller as claimed in claim 29, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

10 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

15 means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

20 usage between specified times during any day,

monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

25 user device limitation,

number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

30 priority of access with respect to other users,

nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

33. A controller as claimed in claim 29, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

5 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service provided on a specified communications systems;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

10 means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

15 usage between specified times during any day,

monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

20 user device limitation,

number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

25 priority of access with respect to other users,

nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

- 30 34. A controller as claimed in claim 29, comprising a closed messaging device for the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices and includes means to receive and store messages from disparate messaging services.

35. A controller as claimed in claim 29, comprising a unified messaging server having means for storing store-forward-messaging services.
- 5 36. A controller as claimed in claim 29, comprising a unified messaging server having means for storing store-forward-messaging services and which comprises one or more of:- email; voicemail; fax received and SMS messages.
37. A controller as claimed in claim 29, comprising:-
- 10 means to allow users access to view a document;
- means to allow the user edit the document;
- 15 means to store the changes in the document due to editing by a user, said changes being identified by user .
38. A controller as claimed in claim 1, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-
- 20 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;
- means for defining a plurality of privileges; and
- 25 means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.
39. A controller as claimed in claim 38, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-
- 30 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

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total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

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monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

user device limitation,

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number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

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nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

40. A controller as claimed in claim 38, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

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means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service provided on a specified communications systems;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

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means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

5 monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

10 user device limitation,

number of users already provided with the privilege communications
system traffic handling capabilities,

15 priority of access with respect to other users,

nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

41. A controller as claimed in claim 38, comprising a closed messaging device for
the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices and
20 includes means to receive and store messages from disparate messaging
services.

42. A controller as claimed in claim 38, comprising a unified messaging server
having means for storing store-forward-messaging services.

25 43. A controller as claimed in claim 38, comprising a unified messaging server
having means for storing store-forward-messaging services and which
comprises one or more of:- email; voicemail; fax received and SMS messages.

30 44. A controller as claimed in claim 38, comprising:-

means to allow users access to view a document;

means to allow the user edit the document;

means to store the changes in the document due to editing by a user,
said changes being identified by user.

45. A controller as claimed in claim 1, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service provided on a specified communications systems;

means for defining a plurality of privileges; and

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.

46. A controller as claimed in claim 45, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

user device limitation,

5 number of users already provided with the privilege communications
system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

10 nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

47. A controller as claimed in claim 45, in which the roles and privileges logic
controller comprises:-

15 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service
provided on a specified communications systems;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

20 means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the
privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

25 usage between specified times during any day,

monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

30 user device limitation,

number of users already provided with the privilege communications

system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

5 nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

48. A controller as claimed in claim 45, comprising a closed messaging device for
the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices and
includes means to receive and store messages from disparate messaging
10 services.

49. A controller as claimed in claim 45, comprising a unified messaging server
having means for storing store-forward-messaging services.

15 50. A controller as claimed in claim 45, comprising a unified messaging server
having means for storing store-forward-messaging services and which
comprises one or more of:- email; voicemail; fax received and SMS messages.

20 51. A controller as claimed in claim 45, comprising:-

means to allow users access to view a document;

means to allow the user edit the document;

25 means to store the changes in the document due to editing by a user,
said changes being identified by user.

52. A controller as claimed in claim 1, in which the roles and privileges logic
controller comprises:-

30 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified
communications system;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

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total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

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monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

user device limitation,

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number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

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nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

53. A controller as claimed in claim 52, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

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means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service provided on a specified communications systems;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

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means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

5 monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

10 user device limitation,

number of users already provided with the privilege communications
system traffic handling capabilities,

15 priority of access with respect to other users,

nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

54. A controller as claimed in claim 52, comprising a closed messaging device for
the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices and
20 includes means to receive and store messages from disparate messaging
services.

55. A controller as claimed in claim 52, comprising a unified messaging server
having means for storing store-forward-messaging services.

25 56. A controller as claimed in claim 52, comprising a unified messaging server
having means for storing store-forward-messaging services and which
comprises one or more of:- email; voicemail; fax received and SMS messages.

30 57. A controller as claimed in claim 52, comprising:-

means to allow users access to view a document;

means to allow the user edit the document;

means to store the changes in the document due to editing by a user,
said changes being identified by user.

58. A controller as claimed in claim 1, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

10 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified service provided on a specified communications systems;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

15 means to allocate at least one privilege to each user; and in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

20 usage between specified times during any day,

monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

25 user device limitation,

number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

30 priority of access with respect to other users,

nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

59. A controller as claimed in claim 58, comprising a closed messaging device for the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices and includes means to receive and store messages from disparate messaging services.
60. A controller as claimed in claim 58, comprising a unified messaging server having means for storing store-forward-messaging services.
61. A controller as claimed in claim 58, comprising a unified messaging server having means for storing store-forward-messaging services and which comprises one or more of:- email; voicemail; fax received and SMS messages.
62. A controller as claimed in claim 58, comprising:-
- means to allow users access to view a document;
- means to allow the user edit the document;
- means to store the changes in the document due to editing by a user, said changes being identified by user.
63. A communications services controller for a communications network comprising a plurality of communications systems connected to a network resource; a plurality of user devices connected to the services controller, the user devices having a capability to use at least one of the communications systems; a plurality of contact devices connected to the network resource and having a capability to use at least one of the communications systems, some of the contact devices being additionally user devices, the services controller comprising:-
- (a) a user directory comprising:-

a user identifier;

data on all communications systems available to the user including a unique identifier for each communications system, and access data to allow the user device access the available communications systems;

(b) a roles and privileges logic controller comprising:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user;

means for storing access rules based on the roles and privileges allocated to the user; and

means to provide access based on the said access rules;

(c) a contacts directory comprising a contacts identifier, data on each communications system available to the contact device, including a unique identifier for each communications system available to the contact device for use in the managed network resource;

(d) an intercommunications server having means for contacting and opening communications using a communications system connected to the network resource between a user device and a contacts device on receiving an access permitted signal, said intercommunications server having means to obtain the necessary access data for the user device from the user directory and for the contact device from the contacts

directory.

64. A controller as claimed in claim 63, in which the intercommunications server comprises means for allowing a user device access more than one communications system simultaneously for contact with the one contact device.

65. A controller as claimed in claim 63, in which the intercommunications server comprises means for allowing a user device access more than one communications system simultaneously for contact with another contact device while communicating with a different contact device.

66. A controller as claimed in claim 63, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises means for storing a record of the access to a communications system obtained by a user during a preset period.

67. A controller as claimed in claim 63, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;

means for defining a plurality of privileges; and

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.

68. A controller as claimed in claim 63, in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

user device limitation,

5 number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

10 nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

69. A controller as claimed in claim 63, comprising:-

15 a conferencing server having means to allow a user device contact the server, and

means in the server to aggregate the data to and from each user device to provide a single incoming and outgoing data stream independent of the number of users.

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70. A controller as claimed in claim 63, comprising a closed messaging device for the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices and includes means to receive and store messages from disparate messaging services.

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71. A controller as claimed in claim 63, comprising a unified messaging server having means for storing store-forward-messaging services.

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72. A controller as claimed in claim 63, comprising a unified messaging server having means for storing store-forward-messaging services and which comprises one or more of:- email; voicemail; fax received and SMS messages.

73. A controller as claimed in claim 63, comprising:-

means to allow users access to view a document;

5 means to allow the user edit the document;

means to store the changes in the document due to editing by a user,
said changes being identified by user.

10 74. A communications services controller for a communications network comprising
a plurality of communications systems connected to a network resource; a
plurality of user devices connected to the services controller, the user devices
having a capability to use at least one of the communications systems; a
15 plurality of contact devices connected to the network resource and having a
capability to use at least one of the communications systems, some of the
contact devices being additionally user devices, the services controller
comprising:-

(a) a user directory comprising:-

20 a user identifier;

data on all communications systems available to the user
including a unique identifier for each communications system,
25 and access data to allow the user device access the available
communications systems;

(b) a roles and privileges logic controller comprising:-

30 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified
service provided on a specified communications system:

means for defining a plurality of privileges;

means to allocate at least one privilege to each user;

means for storing access rules based on the roles and privileges allocated to the user;

means to provide access based on the said access rules;

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- (c) a contacts directory comprising a contacts identifier, data on each communications system available to the contact device, including a unique identifier for each communications system available to the contact device for use in the managed network resource;
 - (d) an intercommunications server having means for contacting and opening communications using a communications system connected to the network resource between a user device and a contacts device on receiving an access permitted signal, said intercommunications server having means to obtain the necessary access data for the user device from the user directory and for the contact device from the contacts directory.
75. A controller as claimed in claim 73, in which the intercommunications server comprises means for allowing a user device access more than one communications system simultaneously for contact with the one contact device.
76. A controller as claimed in claim 73, in which the intercommunications server comprises means for allowing a user device access more than one communications system simultaneously for contact with another contact device while communicating with a different contact device.
77. A controller as claimed in claim 73, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises means for storing a record of the access to a communications system obtained by a user during a preset period.

78. A controller as claimed in claim 73, in which the roles and privileges logic controller comprises:-

5 means for defining a privilege as an access rule to a specified communications system;

means for defining a plurality of privileges; and

10 means to allocate at least one privilege to each user.

79. A controller as claimed in claim 73, in which the privilege is one or more of:-

15 total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

monetary limits over a specified time limit,

20 incoming use only,

user device limitation,

25 number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

30 nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

80. A controller as claimed in claim 73, comprising:-

a conferencing server having means to allow a user device contact the

server, and

means in the server to aggregate the data to and from each user device to provide a single incoming and outgoing data stream independent of the number of users.

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81. A controller as claimed in claim 73, comprising a closed messaging device for the reception and storage of messages for nominated user devices and includes means to receive and store messages from disparate messaging services.

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82. A controller as claimed in claim 73, comprising a unified messaging server having means for storing store-forward-messaging services.

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83. A controller as claimed in claim 73, comprising a unified messaging server having means for storing store-forward-messaging services and which comprises one or more of:- email; voicemail; fax received and SMS messages.

84. A controller as claimed in claim 73, comprising:-

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means to allow users access to view a document;

means to allow the user edit the document;

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means to store the changes in the document due to editing by a user, said changes being identified by user.

85. A method in a communications network of controlling and facilitating the use by users of user devices for at least one communications system connected to a network resource, and contact devices for at least one communications system connected to the network resource comprising the initial steps of:-

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allocating to and storing a user identifier for each user;

collecting and storing data on each communications system available to the user;

5 collecting and storing access data to allow a user device, operated by the user, access each available communications system;

10 allocating to and storing by means of privileges rules to the user, the terms and conditions under which access to each communications system is permitted;

allocating to and storing a contact identifier to a contact;

15 collecting and storing contact access data to allow a user device access the contact on a contact device and on a user requesting access to a contact, the steps are performed of:-

20 consulting the privileges rules and on the access to the communications system being permitted, retrieving the contact access data and using the access data to connect the user device to the contact device.

25 86. A method as claimed in claim 85, in which, on the user requesting to be connected to a contact device, the access data to allow the user device to communicate with the contact is not available, the user first collects the necessary access data for storage.

30 87. A method as claimed in claim 86, in which the user device is connected to the contact device by more than one communications system.

88. A method as claimed in claim 86, in which the user device is connected to two different contact devices.

89. A method as claimed in claim 86, in which there is stored a record of the access to a communications system obtained by a user during a preset period.

90. A method as claimed in claim 86, in which the privilege is one or more of:-

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total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

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monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

user device limitation,

15

number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

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nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

91. A computer program comprising program instructions for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 86.

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92. A computer program comprising program instructions embodied on a record medium for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 86.

93. A computer program comprising program instructions stored in a computer memory for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 86.

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94. A computer program comprising program instructions embodied in a read only memory for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 86.

95. A computer program comprising program instructions on an electrical signal carrier for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 86.

5 96. A method as claimed in claim 85, in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

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monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

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user device limitation,

number of users already provided with the privilege communications
system traffic handling capabilities,

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priority of access with respect to other users,

nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

97. A method as claimed in claim 96, in which, on the user requesting to be
25 connected to a contact device, the access data to allow the user device to
communicate with the contact is not available, the user first collects the
necessary access data for storage.

98. A method as claimed in claim 96, in which the user device is connected to the
30 contact device by more than one communications system.

99. A method as claimed in claim 96, in which the user device is connected to two
different contact devices.

100. A method as claimed in claim 96, in which there is stored a record of the access to a communications system obtained by a user during a preset period.
- 5 101. A method as claimed in claim 96, in which the privilege is one or more of:-
- total duration of use within a specified time period,
- usage between specified times during any day,
- 10 monetary limits over a specified time limit,
- incoming use only,
- 15 user device limitation,
- number of users already provided with the privilege communications system traffic handling capabilities,
- 20 priority of access with respect to other users,
- nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.
102. A computer program comprising program instructions for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 96.
- 25 103. A computer program comprising program instructions embodied on a record medium for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 96.
- 30 104. A computer program comprising program instructions stored in a computer memory for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 96.
105. A computer program comprising program instructions embodied in a read only

memory for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 96.

106. A computer program comprising program instructions on an electrical signal carrier for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 96.

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107. A method in a communications network in which the initial steps have been performed of:-

allocating to and storing a user identifier for each user;

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collecting and storing data on each communications system available to the user;

collecting and storing access data to allow a user device, operated by the user, access each available communications system;

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allocating to and storing by means of privileges rules to the user, the terms and conditions under which access to each communications system is permitted;

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allocating to and storing a contact identifier to a contact;

collecting and storing contact access data to allow a user device access the contact on a contact device and on a user requesting access to a contact, the method comprising:-

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consulting the privileges rules and on the access to the communications system being permitted, retrieving the contact access data and using the access data to connect the user device to the contact device.

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108. A method as claimed in claim 107, in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

5 monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

user device limitation,

10 number of users already provided with the privilege communications
system traffic handling capabilities,

priority of access with respect to other users,

15 nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

109. A method as claimed in claim 108, in which, on the user requesting to be
connected to a contact device, the access data to allow the user device to
20 communicate with the contact is not available, the user first collects the
necessary access data for storage.

110. A method as claimed in claim 108, in which the user device is connected to the
contact device by more than one communications system.

25 111. A method as claimed in claim 108, in which the user device is connected to two
different contact devices.

112. A method as claimed in claim 108, in which there is stored a record of the
30 access to a communications system obtained by a user during a preset period.

113. A method as claimed in claim 108, in which the privilege is one or more of:-

total duration of use within a specified time period,

usage between specified times during any day,

5 monetary limits over a specified time limit,

incoming use only,

10 user device limitation,

number of users already provided with the privilege communications
system traffic handling capabilities,

15 priority of access with respect to other users,

nature of contact which it is desired to communicate with.

114. A computer program comprising program instructions embodied on a record
medium for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 108.

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115. A computer program comprising program instructions stored in a computer
memory for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 108.

116. A computer program comprising program instructions embodied in a read only
25 memory for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 108.

117. A computer program comprising program instructions on an electrical signal
carrier for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 108.

30 118. A method as claimed in claim 107, in which, on the user requesting to be
connected to a contact device, the access data to allow the user device to
communicate with the contact is not available, the user first collects the
necessary access data for storage.

119. A method as claimed in claim 107, in which the user device is connected to the contact device by more than one communications system.
- 5 120. A method as claimed in claim 107, in which the user device is connected to two different contact devices.
121. A method as claimed in claim 107, in which there is stored a record of the access to a communications system obtained by a user during a preset period.
- 10 122. A computer program comprising program instructions for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 107.
123. A computer program comprising program instructions embodied on a record medium for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 107.
- 15 124. A computer program comprising program instructions stored in a computer memory for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 107.
- 20 125. A computer program comprising program instructions embodied in a read only memory for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 107.
126. A computer program comprising program instructions on an electrical signal carrier for causing a computer to perform the method of claim 107.